

ABSTRACT

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The Italian agency for Development and Cooperation, established by the law 125 (11th of August 2014), aims at improving Italian cooperation's effectiveness and promoting sustainable development in partner countries reducing all forms of poverty and inequalities.

Italian Cooperation has an important tradition in promoting disabled persons' rights and the Agency intends to continue on the path taken because development could not forgo freedom of choice and equal opportunities in an inclusive perspective.

As stated in the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, it is acknowledged that disability results from the interaction between the individual's characteristics and the environment she lives and works in. Along these lines, the Agency supports initiatives in different countries, all addressed to the elimination and reduction of cultural, structural or environmental barriers that could hinder the access to human rights by persons with disabilities.

The approach adopted is of a participatory kind and includes the collaboration between institutions, civil society and the Italian and local businesses to contribute in the realization of products and services that are accessible by everyone, with no distinction.

This approach was used in the wording of the document "Guidelines for the introduction of the disability issue within the policies and activities of the Italian Cooperation" adopted by the Agency in 2018. In May 2017, a work group consisting of representatives of the institutions and the civil society created this document, consistent with the sustainable development goals and being a continuation of the work carried out by the Agency during the last decade.

The document provides an updated framework; it points out the approaches and the strategies and provides useful recommendations for the inclusion of the disability issue in the context of the Agency's action. The aim was to create more inclusive societies through the strengthening of knowledge and competence of the institutions and the civil society's representatives. This goal is achievable because of the alliances and partnerships that add value to the Agency's initiatives.

The Guide Lines have a transversal approach in relation to the various issues that are subject of the initiatives supported by the Agency. They are consistent with the UN Convention, with the European strategy, with the sustainable development Goals and with the various international documents in the sector.

The adoption of this document represents a first step towards the realization of inclusive projects and it states the will of the Agency to provide an operative tool in order to realize actions that could genuinely contribute to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities.